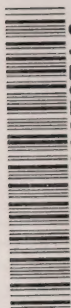


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Prospective ROTP and SSOP naval officer cadets show a keen interest in a naval Tracker anti-submarine aircraft of the kind they will fly if they are accepted for naval aviation. The picture was taken at Centralia, Ont.

OFFICER SELECTION

THE YOUNG MAN was making a good impression on the naval selection board. His voice was strong, his answers were forthright, and there was not a trace of nervousness.

His name was Thomas Knight. He was 18 years old and he had just completed his senior matriculation in a high school in Saskatchewan.

He wanted two things: The first was a university education, to graduate with a degree in engineering physics. His second desire was to serve in the Navy. A few months earlier, he had learned there was a way he could do both, provided he got through high school with good marks and was able to prove to a group of experienced naval officers and educators that he had what it takes.

Tom had been sitting in front of the selection board for about 20 minutes, answering the questions put to him by

its six members. It didn't seem like a test, there had been plenty of those during the past 10 days, and this session was more like an informal chat. The officers were polite and seemed genuinely interested in him; the captain especially had questioned him at length about his attitude towards sports, his studies, hobbies and work.

In a moment, Tom was thanked and allowed to leave the board room.

Captain Peter Cossette, Director of Naval Manning, Naval Headquarters, sat back in his chair, looked around the table at each of his board members, and smiled.

"I think we've got a winner in that young gentleman. What do you think?"

Dr. Harry Smith, President of the University of King's College, Halifax, agreed.

"I hope he picks King's!"

The others chuckled, and each gave his vote of approval. Tom Knight would be provisionally selected as a Regular Officer Training Plan Naval Officer Cadet at either a Canadian Service College or a Canadian university. The final decision would be made in a few weeks. In his case, approval would be forthcoming in a telegram from the Minister of National Defence, offering a university education to the degree level in engineering physics.

Tom is now going to university and doing well. He is also fully aware of his good fortune and that his hard work in high school has paid good dividends. His university education isn't costing him or his parents a cent. It is being paid for by the Department of National Defence, which over the next four years

will spend close to \$40,000 in tuition, books and salary on behalf of Thomas Knight.

In the spring of 1967, Tom will become an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy and his university degree will qualify him for a rewarding career in the years ahead.

Tom has won his scholarship by applying the same formula used by 185 other young high school junior and senior matriculants selected this year for ROTP Naval Officer cadetship. They had attained good marks in school, kept physically and mentally alert, and out of trouble. They had set their sights on an objective and had worked to achieve it, thereby creating a lasting personal attitude that will continue to pay dividends for the rest of their lives.

Young men of Tom's calibre have been selected each year since 1952 by the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force, and all three services are convinced that university training through the tri-service ROTP is a sound method of grooming young men of service as career officers. As you read this article over 2,000 "Tom Knights" from all over Canada are going to university or one of the three Canadian Service Colleges: the Royal Military College of Canada, at Kingston, Royal Roads, near Victoria, and le Collège Militaire Royal de Saint-Jean, near Montreal, with all costs borne by the Department of National Defence. In addition to their academic training, they undergo military instruction de-

signed to prepare them for service as naval, army or air force officers.

The RCN uses facilities at RCAF Station Centralia, near London, Ont., for cadet selection for economy's sake and because some of the naval officer cadets selected will serve in naval aviation, flying the anti-submarine planes and helicopters of the fleet.

There are three steps to the selection of a naval ROTP officer cadet. The first takes place at the recruiting office in or near the young man's home town, where the candidate fills in the required application forms, is given a preliminary interview by the recruiting officer, and undergoes a physical examination.

On the basis of the result of these initial studies, the young man is recommended for the second step, an intensive 10-day psychological probing at Centralia of the candidate's emotional stability, academic ability, leadership potential, physical and mental condition, power of expression, logic and general knowledge.

Last summer, the RCN selection board processed the applications of over 400 candidates and selected 185 of them for sponsored education to the degree level. In four to five years, most of them will graduate and be commissioned to serve in the ships, aircraft and shore establishments of the Navy. A small percentage will drop out along the way, unable to maintain the academic standard expected of the cadets by the Navy.

The third step of the selection process takes place at Naval Headquarters,

where the dossier of each applicant is given further study. By August, the high school marks of the applicant are indicative of his potential to succeed.

The most important step of the three is the 10-day "crucible" of Centralia, which is designed to determine the existing, but not readily apparent, qualities of the applicant.

The officer commanding the RCAF Selection Unit in Centralia is Squadron Leader A. E. Paxton. He said the role of officer cadet selection is to determine the potential the candidate possesses; the latent properties of the candidate must be assessed, not merely the experience he acquired prior to his arrival at Centralia.

Squadron Leader Paxton also said the testing and assessment process is designed to measure the young man's intellectual, social, emotional, moral and physical development. In the end, the service gets reasonably clear insight into the make-up of the candidate, and can make a fairly accurate estimation of his potential as an officer, a leader of seamen or airmen.

Captain Cossette expressed his views on the subject. He said that it is not easy to become a service officer, and not every young man has what it takes. "The naval officer lives a different life; much of his time is spent in a comparatively small ship on the high seas, living in close association with other men, often under conditions of considerable stress. In selecting young men who will become officers, the Navy looks for those who can think on their feet in spite of conditions or problems, and who can live with, lead and manage the men they command under any circumstances.

"This is a heavy responsibility and it takes a particular type of man to carry it. Naturally, the Navy wants to pick the best, and therein lies the reason behind the care taken in the selection of ROTP cadets."

There are three basic phases to the Centralia selection system. The first involves a complete medical assessment.

The candidate is then turned over to assessors for a further exploratory interview, dealing with subjects such as school, relationships with teachers and fellow students, sports, music, literature, morals, part-time or full-time employment, and hobbies. He is also questioned about domestic and international current affairs and history. The candidate's answers and his attitude during the interview are carefully noted.

Following this exploratory interview, the candidates are grouped in syndicates of seven or eight men for a series of group tests.



Applicants under test in the Naval Selection Centre, RCAF Station Centralia, often find seemingly simple tests tax their mental and physical ability. Here they are asked to devise a means of crossing a minefield. Those with leadership ability soon emerge from the group. (CE-63-215-4)

The first group test is in the form of a round table discussion which may involve any number of topics ranging from some development in international affairs to the question of whether teenager should go steady.

From the classroom, the eight-man syndicate moves to a large, enclosed compound where physical demands are added to mental requirements. The candidates are placed in a situation which may require them to imagine themselves prisoners of war endeavouring to escape. There are "obstacles" in their path, such as a mine field, electrically charged-fence or some other deterrent. They must find a way out within a limited period of time.

The problems look childishly simple on initial exposure but the candidates soon find themselves mired in a swamp of built-in frustrations. The problem may or may not be solved within the given time limit but it will have allowed a tentative assessment of potential leadership ability or a lack of it.

The syndicates are put through a series of these problems and, for some of them, each man is delegated the leader, providing the assessors with an opportunity to evaluate individual performance and the degree of organizational and leadership ability. The logic of each leader's approach to the problem is measured along with his judgment in applying it. From these exercises come not only an assessment of candidate's leadership potential but also of his ability to work with others.

From this variety of tests and exercises, interviews and discussions, the assessors gain a firm insight into the make-up of each candidate and are able to make a prediction of his chances of becoming a successful leader. A report is then written on each candidate



A discussion period, which is listened to carefully by the assessors, serves to indicate the candidate's vocabulary, his ability to express himself and his self-confidence. The viewpoints of young men from widely separated parts of the country reveal interesting contrasts. (CE-63-215-2)

and this, coupled with the findings of the medical examination, forms the basis of the naval selection board's decision on each candidate.

Those who want to enter naval aviation are given additional tests by service pilots to determine their aptitude in this field. Those who are not considered suitable for aviation are told the facts and if they are suitable in all other respects, they are still in the running for the surface fleet.

Those who fail the process entirely are informed of their unsuitability for service life.

So it can be seen that the selection of young men to be Canada's future naval officers is not a simple process. Great care is taken in assessing the candidate's ability, self-confidence, leadership potential, physical condition and general character.

Substantial sums of money will be spent on the university and naval training of those young men who do make the grade. This coupled with the responsibility they will ultimately shoulder requires that only those with the necessary qualities and potential can be selected.



ROGER DUHAMEL, F.R.S.C.
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